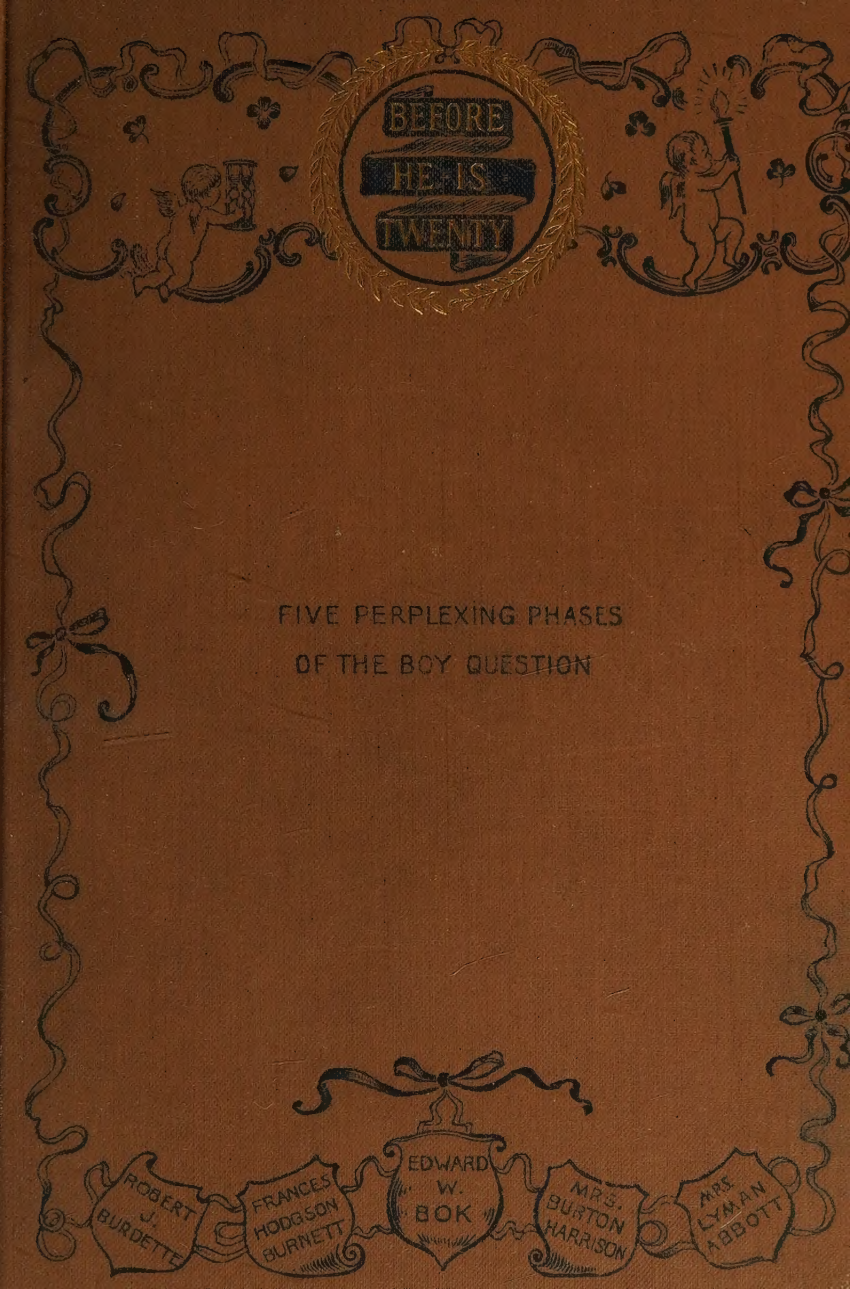




BEFORE
HE IS
TWENTY

FIVE PERPLEXING PHASES
OF THE BOY QUESTION

ROBERT
J.
BURDETTE

FRANCES
HODGSON
BURNETT

EDWARD
W.
BOK

MRS.
BURTON
HARRISON

MRS.
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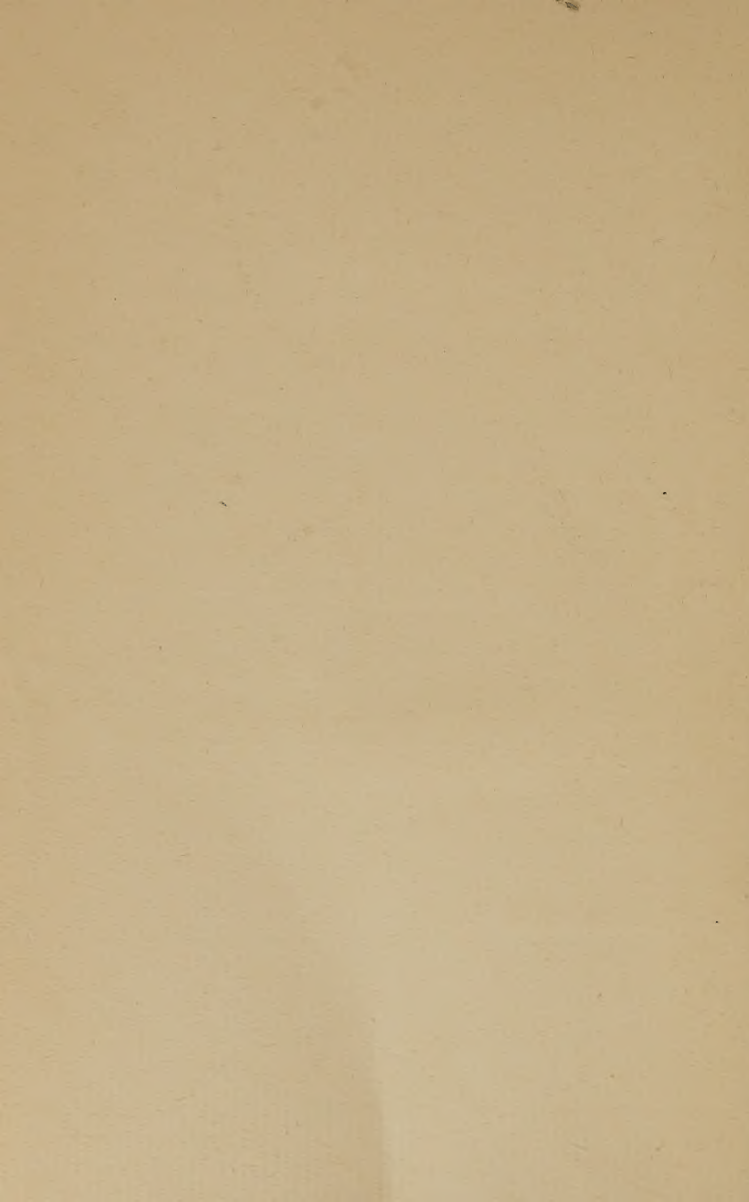
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BEFORE HE IS TWENTY

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*Five Perplexing Phases of the
Boy Question Considered*

BY

ROBERT J. BURDETTE
FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT
EDWARD W. BOK
MRS. BURTON HARRISON
MRS. LYMAN ABBOTT

WITH PORTRAITS OF THE AUTHORS



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INTRODUCTION

HE boy of the period is unquestionably interesting. He is more so than was his brother of a century ago, because the world is a century farther on. And this means much in the ever-changing conditions of life. It means much, particularly, to parents who are charged with the responsibility of a training that must adjust itself, in a greater or less degree, to the time in which their boys are born, live, and shall live.

It is for the purpose of presenting the wisest and best concentrated modern thought on the different phases of the boy of the period that the articles in this little book

INTRODUCTION

were conceived. They were originally written by their authors for *The Ladies' Home Journal*, and their publication in that magazine elicited such approving comment in letters from thousands of parents that their reissue in this more permanent form was deemed justifiable by the present publishers.

Omitting any reference to the third article, it is but just credit to the papers in this book to say that they represent the broadest and wisest views on the different phases of a boy's training. To each author was given that phase of a boy's life with which he or she had most experience and the best practical knowledge. If the rudimentary principles of a boy's best training vary not with the centuries, changing conditions sometimes make the wisest methods of their application different. It is this latter fact, more particularly, that it is sought to present in these articles.

A single mistake in the early training of a boy often mars his entire future. If any

INTRODUCTION

word printed in these pages shall prevent such a parental error, the book will have accomplished its highest mission, and fulfilled the object of its compiler.

EDWARD W. BOK.

PHILADELPHIA, 1894.

Phase One

THE FATHER AND HIS BOY

BY ROBERT J. BURDETTE





Robert J. Burdette.



Robert J. Lawrence,

THE FATHER AND HIS BOY



HAT shall be the attitude of a father toward his boy?" Ah me! woe is the over-confident man who shall attempt to settle that question, once and forever, for the millions of fathers with millions of boys—not millions apiece but millions in the aggregate—as many minds as there are fathers, and as many changing theories as there are fathers and boys together. If some man wiser, or at least more practical in the application of his wisdom, than Solomon would only come along and whitewash the path for us, so that we might walk in a straight way in the darkest night, how glad—and well-nigh had the thoughtless pen written "grateful"—would we be. How glad and ungrateful, then, we would be. That sounds harsh, but it is the truth.

There is a certain attitude which the father has assumed for him, in his boy's eyes, over which he has little control. President Weston says, in one of his matchless sermons—the quotation made from memory is tamely done—that to the child in early years the father occupies the position of God; the boy comes to the father for everything, confidently asking impossibilities; asking with all simplicity and perfect trust for gifts that would impoverish an emperor; looking to his father for daily food, raiment, protection; fearing no harm while he holds his father's hand; accepting as truth every statement made by him; in all respects bearing himself toward his father in trust, confidence, loyalty, reverence, as we try to stand in our relation to God.

Now, every man who knows anything about boys knows this to be true. The father is the boy's ideal of faultless and splendid manhood. He believes his father to be a little bit wiser, somewhat stronger,

rather better looking, much better, and far more learned and truthful than other men. He goes to school and confronts his teacher on some disputed passage with a triumphant "My father says the book is wrong," and down go teacher and author in the confusion of exposed ignorance. "My father says so" proves anything for the loving boy. The father does not assume this attitude. The boy makes of him this ideal. Is the man, knowing his own poor acquirements, his narrow limitations, his faulty character and imperfect life, to foster this ideal? There comes a day when the child, wise or foolish, knows his own father. Let the man, then, be honest with his boy. Let the boy understand that his father has not forgotten the days of his own youth. Let the boy feel that his father wants to be his close companion and friend as well as his counselor and guardian.

Don't be a hypocrite before your boy. When he believes you to be infallible don't encourage the belief. Take him into your

life as you desire to be taken into his. Don't tell him that when you were a boy you never gave your parents a moment's uneasiness, were never cross to your little sister, never disobeyed your teacher, never cruel to dumb animals, and always kept the Golden Rule. Be honest with him above all things. Don't be too dignified with him. The more he loves you, the more he lives in your arms, the more he plays with you, and the less he fears you, the more profoundly will he respect you. Pity the man who, in order to secure and retain proper respect from his children, has to wear at all times an uncomfortable veneer of artificial dignity.

You want him to be a man—it doesn't make so much difference whether he is a "gentleman," so called, or not. But a man is a man the world over. Imagine Pilate leading the Man of Nazareth, thorn-crowned and robed in purple mockery, before the people, crying, "Behold the gentleman!" Fancy the "two men in white apparel" say-

ing to the men who were to revolutionize government and religion and conduct all over this whole world, "Ye gentlemen of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" Your boy shall be a man, and the model of his life you will help him to find in the manhood of the New Testament. Meekness of spirit, noble aspirations, a merciful disposition, gentleness, purity of heart, cleanliness of thought, chastity, right conduct, moderation in speech, generosity, magnanimity, forgiveness of wrongs, modesty, loyalty to duty, charity in judgment, practical wisdom—all these he will find in the Sermon on the Mount. All the cardinal principles, the sure foundations upon which pure, true manhood is builded, he will find in the teachings and the model of the New Testament. There is no other standard, no other model of faultless manhood.

"To what extent should license be given the boy in all matters mental and moral?" Well, about as much license as it has been

found safe to give the human race in general. Aristotle, who knew some things as well as others, if not better, says somewhere, "Now, the youthful in character are prone to desire and inclined to do anything they may have set their hearts upon." Be it far from the light-minded writer of this paper to make any attempt to improve upon Aristotle, but an amendment might be offered right here to the effect that there are some very stubborn old men in this world, and some aged people of both sexes, who "are inclined to do anything they may have set their hearts upon." Liberty, or if you prefer, license, in too broad measure is good neither for boy nor man until he knows what to do with it. Grant him wide freedom within certain limits, under certain restrictions, the freedom, if you please, of the Garden of Eden. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat." Don't make too many rules for him ;

make them the general principles of the ten commandments. It's terrible to be pelted with a fusillade of "don'ts" all day. Sometimes the boy wouldn't think of doing certain things if you didn't remind him that he mustn't. "Jack, run right over to the post-office with this letter and come straight home." "Yes, father." "And mind you don't go around by Pyle's mill where the Gladwyne boys are swimming, and don't go around behind Fisher's barn where the boys are playing ball." "No, father." And if Jack doesn't go to the mill and the barn it is because his obedience is far superior to his father's good sense. We multiply rules and commandments beyond the memory of a catalogue, which we expect a boy to remember after we have forgotten them. God wrote only ten commandments for a nation of grown-up people to obey, and they broke about half of them before they were promulgated, and went on forgetting the remainder all the rest of the time. If some of

our modern fathers and mothers had written the Decalogue for their children it would have been written in ten chapters each of a hundred paragraphs; every paragraph would have begun with "don't," and every don't would have had an exclamation point after it.

A boy leaves home in the morning burdened with more injunctions than a railroad fighting for a crossing, and naturally he forgets half of them before he gets to school, and the other half before the first forbidden game is played through. It isn't well to make a rule for him that you know perfectly well he will break, just as you broke it at his age every time it was laid upon you. "Now, don't run when you play, and overheat yourself." You hear that in some, that is, in nearly all, homes every day as the boy starts to school. Feet of the dun deer! What live boy ever played without running? Make broad, comprehensive laws, and few of them. He'll learn, with your help—he can't learn alone—to supply the details and to legislate

under the constitution. Russia is the only great "paternal" government in the world which attempts to lay down a rule for the simplest actions of its subjects' lives. It is also, without question or exception, the worst government in the world.

"How should a father enter into his son's religious life?" Certainly as far as a minister should enter into the religious life of any member of his congregation, of any one whom he desires to lead in right paths. You can't teach a boy the principles of the purest and noblest manhood without teaching him religion. Teach him, by all means, that the great concern of his life is his relation to God; that religion is the great business of life; that this will go with him after his money is dross, his broad acres of fertile lands desolate desert, his family extinct, his name forgotten from the minds and faded out of the records of men; that it is the only thing that will go with him beyond the grave. Prepare him for the last lonely jour-

ney he will take as carefully, as thoughtfully, as earnestly as you help to get him ready for a trip to California, a voyage to Europe, or his departure for college. You need not frighten him into religion; it is better not, because then you will have to keep him scared all the time to keep him in it. Lead him into it.

It may be that you are an irreligious man. You may not care for what you call "this sort of thing" for yourself, but if you are an honest man you know it is a good thing for your boy. You may find something good for yourself while you are teaching him. Talk to him about these things naturally, as you talk about anything else—his studies, his plays, his companions. It isn't always well to appoint a set hour and place, calling him into your room with a countenance of such awful, woe-begone solemnity and a voice so sepulchral in its hollow intonation that the boy's first chilling fear is that his mother has fallen down dead, and his second,

that he is going to get a most terrific thrashing for some of his many misdeeds, and he is so frightened that he can't think which one. Take him into your confidence; tell him of your own early aspirations and fears and hopes, your first thoughts upon religious questions; talk to him about your "experience" so that he can understand it without any of the half-intelligible cant of the average "experience-meeting," in phrases which convey nothing to the boy, and which too often he thinks he is expected to imitate if he wants to "get religion." The best and sweetest religious teaching the boy gets is at his mother's knee. She lays the foundation for the building of a pure and noble character in the sweet old Bible stories, the tender Psalms, the loving words of the Saviour, the exalting, uplifting sentiments of the Epistles, and the sublime strains of the old prophets. The pastor might shake his head doubtfully at her exegesis sometimes, but her teaching is tender and loving and pure, and goes right

to the heart of the child, and is the beginning of his religious life.

Many men talk to their boys about religion—you know they do—as though they were half ashamed of it, and heave a sigh of relief when the topic is exhausted, or rather dies of inanition, and the conversation, turning into a lighter, frivolous channel, ripples along with all the gayety of the chatter and gossip in the rear carriage on the return from a funeral. This great question of your boy's religious life should be discussed as freely and frequently and frankly as the matter of his selection of a profession or business. And, man, be sure of this: once your boy takes you into the fullest confidence of his religious life, tells you his temptations, his weaknesses, what he is striving for and what he is fighting against, bares his heart and his life to you almost as he opens it to God—you have a hold upon him, a knowledge and power to help him that nothing else in the world can give you. You know him then.

How many men know their boys so well as strangers know them? How many things vitally important in his physical and moral life does a boy learn with brutal coarseness from vile men that he should have been taught with tender and careful wisdom by his father? What do you know about your boy? What do you know of the temptations which beset him, the temptations which are far greater and far more seductive than those of your own young days?

“The question of punishment—how best effected?” Well—if the patient reader will pardon the unseemly intrusion of the capital “I” right here—I should say, looking at the question from my own point of view, that very often it is best effected by omitting it. Bear in mind, this is the view of a man who has known in his life very intimately in close, complete confidence but two boys, himself and his own boy. And he doesn’t believe in the rod at all. Beating isn’t very good for horses; the best and most successful trainers

use the whip very little or not at all, and it isn't a bit good for children. Boys must be punished sometimes, say many times, just as men and women have to be punished many times. But God doesn't beat us. Every time we lie He doesn't strike us with lightning; every time we break a commandment the earth does not yawn and swallow us up. His gentlest punishments are the heaviest. It wasn't a hot word of scathing and contemptuous rebuke that broke bad Peter's heart, that melted it into a fountain of burning tears; it was a loving, compassionate, pitying look. Fire and brimstone can't make a hell so hot and terrible as self-reproach, remorse, heart-deep penitence, sorrow for sin. We beat the boy, not often for his good, but because we are angry and want to beat somebody until the burst of anger is over. Then we are a busy people, and whipping takes up less of our valuable time than any other mode of punishment. To reason with the boy, to talk it over with him calmly and lov-

ingly, would take an hour, maybe two hours. But you can whip him in three minutes. A man fighting, say at one hundred and fifty-two pounds, ought to be able to knock a nine-year-old boy out in the first round. You go on to your work nervous, half ashamed, irritable, your conscience, if it be not seared to callousness, lashing you with a whip of scorpions. And the boy goes his way, wrath and hate and contempt writhing in his heart born of the pain and ache on his smarting back. It is the punishment of the savage; it has been abolished from the navy and the army, and is retained only in Christian homes, and other homes not quite so Christian.

And if whipping does very little good—mind, I don't admit that it does any—scolding, which is the next most popular mode of punishment, does absolutely no good whatever, under any circumstances. Not one particle. All the scolding in the world, from the dawn of creation down to the present time, never did one solitary bit of good. It makes

people—boys, girls, women, and men—nervous with anger; it irritates, annoys, frets, and maddens them; drives boys away from home, and men to distraction, and that is about all it does. People say, “Well, see how your favorite grand old prophets scolded.” Yes, they did, and some of them got sawed in two for it. And the people whom they scolded went on worse than ever. Besides, they scolded men, who ought to know better; we are discussing the punishment of boys. Don’t scold a boy. If you only knew of what he was thinking while you were scolding him you’d never do it again.

Of course, there must be punishment for offenses; punishment for the sake of discipline. The prohibitory law without the penal clause is of very little effect. But revenge isn’t punishment. It is better by your example, by your helpful companionship, by your honest counsel, to keep the boy out of trouble than it is to whip him for getting into it. The more loving and forgiving your punish-

ments, the deeper will be their impression upon the heart of the boy. Be gentle and patient with him. His worst faults irritate you the most keenly because you know whence he inherits them. If you are going to make him a New Testament man, model yourself on the same lines. It was Elisha, the prophet, a good man, a holy man, and a just man, who in righteous anger laid upon Gehazi the leprosy of Naaman that should "cleave unto him and unto his children forever," a punishment for covetousness and lying. But when the Man of Nazareth came into the world He laid His hand upon the leper and cleansed him with perfect healing and tender words. When you have made up your mind in about ten minutes or ten seconds that your boy needs a good sound whipping, take about three days to think over it—a whipping will keep for a week—and then see if you can take a stick and beat him.

Phase Two

WHEN HE DECIDES

BY FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT



Yours sincerely
Frances Hodgson Burnett



Very faint, illegible text, possibly a signature or a name, located below the portrait.

WHEN HE DECIDES

T was a clever, actively thinking, handsome lad of sixteen who suggested to my mind the train of thought which led me to feel that there were certain things it might be good to say on the subject of this period in a boy's life—when he decides.

“I sometimes think,” he said, with a half-humorous, half-troubled knitting of a very fine pair of straight black brows, “I often think that perhaps it would be a good idea for a fellow to be buried when he was fifteen and not dug up again until after he was twenty. It's so hard for a boy to know just exactly what it is best to do.”

He was quoting some one with an easy sense of humor who had suggested the temporary interment method as a way of dis-

posing of a difficulty. And the fact that his mind recurred to it, even though half in jest, was all the more suggestive, as he was not an unfortunate and unhappy boy, but an exceptionally fortunate one. He was clever, surrounded with advantages, strong, good-looking, and the lucky possessor of parents intelligent enough and sufficiently well placed to be able to aid in the carrying out of any plan he formed.

But being an intelligent young thing, at sixteen, he felt that he had reached the point where a man—though he is still only a school-boy—must begin to decide. With him the questions he had to decide were some of them much simpler than those many boys of his age struggle with. “At which university shall I gain most?” does not seem a difficult question, if, the choice being made, all the rest is arranged simply. “In what profession can I achieve most?” is not appalling as a query, if, a decision again being arrived at, the steps necessary to be taken toward enter-

ing the profession are quite possible. To a boy like himself perhaps the most trying questions are the deciding of mental problems, problems of a growing mind, even points of good manners and good taste, and of adjusting one's youthful self to a world yet too mature to be met easily.

But his intelligence was so far awakened and disturbed by this sense of being on the threshold of the universe that he was finding his decisions anxious enough things. When he decides, a boy may do it at fifteen, at eighteen, at twenty—there are even children who do it in their early years when no one suspects them of the audacity—but sooner or later to a boy who is of the material which makes the men who count as individuals in the great working, advancing world the hour of decision must come, and he must abide by the results, whatsoever they may be.

There has long existed a rather generally accepted theory that from fifteen to twenty years of age a boy is frequently, if not in-

variably, an uninteresting and unprepossessing object. Has any one ever thought of him as pathetic, sometimes overburdened, sometimes even tragic? He is so young—but he is too old to conduct himself as a child or think as a child; he is so old—and yet if he speaks as a man or acts as one he becomes a pretentious seeming and ridiculous object. He may chance to be slow in maturing and be young for his years, and then his people are disappointed in him. He may have the young mind of a man and be full of thought and, perhaps, incoherent opinion, and then if he is not fortunate in having clever, perceptive, and sympathetic friends and relatives he is despised and laughed at as a young prig. He is battling his way through a chaos of development, and how is it possible for him to remain passive and express nothing of what he thinks of the mental *phantasmagoria* which seems passing before him for the first time to his consciousness? And he must decide.

If at sixty he might decide what he would be at sixteen it might not be such a tremendous question. But at sixteen, at eighteen, he must decide what he will be at sixty and at eighty.

Before him stretch all the long years of life, years of thought, of work, of attainment, or years of blighted hope, of struggle and failure and useless despair. Those years may hold so much! And behind him lie his poor, young sixteen or eighteen birthdays, more than half of them the birthdays of a child, and his experience is all that lies between them. And yet he must decide.

And somehow so few people seem to think it is grave, that it is tremendous, that it may be tragic.

If he is a thinking creature, and many, many of them are, even those who are scarcely conscious of it themselves, all the warm kindness the love nearest to him can give, all the intelligently perceptive sympathy that can encourage and uphold, all the

cleverness in aid the most brilliant among his friends can enrich him with, the poor child needs to support him in this hour—when he decides.

And surely it is he, and he alone, who is entitled to the privilege of doing this. There are those, no doubt, who grow up without forming any definite tastes or plans, and who develop no predilections; there are, perhaps, also those who are mentally indolent and prefer that the decisions should be made for them. Of those one may possibly say without injustice that they are not of the material which will be likely to make its maturity a power either in one direction or another. If those who decide for them act with intelligence they may be guided toward some career in which they may lead simple, respectable, if unimportant, lives which, as they are productive of no harm, may almost be counted as productive of good. They will at least, in a measure, represent the ciphers which, being added to the units, give value.

But there are others who, during all the young, growing years, are—at first unconsciously, but later consciously—forming the tastes which become predilections in favor of one career or another. And it is when this is the case that the person in authority, who selfishly or unwisely interferes without mercy, becomes a criminal and a fool.

These are serious words, and used with the serious intention of conveying their full force. They are the result of the gravest thought, a line of thought which has led to the tragic conclusion that there exist, unhappily, parents who are unconsciously criminals, and parents who are unconsciously fools. It must be true that crime and folly are always unconscious of themselves. Tragic as the truth is in its suggestion, it is a truth that the fact that a man or woman is a parent does not invariably prove that he or she is ruled by intelligence or morality. If it did, every blossoming soul would be given its sunshine and dew and shade, every young

mental bloom would be led through its seed-time to harvest, all lives would develop to the best and brightest they could attain on earth, and the millennium would have come. But the millennium is not here, and there are fathers to whom a mere chance of parenthood has given authority without intelligence, mothers who, through the same chance, have power without having soul or brain.

And it is such exceptions as these—let us implore Heaven to grant that they are rare exceptions—who now and then insist that this accident of authority entitles them to decide the future of a life upon its threshold—a life whose disappointments and burdens it will not be theirs to bear; and generally to decide this future through the promptings of some caprice, some imbecile vanity or prejudice, or some sordid whim, that often has neither reason nor excuse for existence.

“I want you to advise me about my son,” wrote a fatuous female of this order to a well-known literary man. “I am dreadfully

worried about him. He is a good boy, but he does not want to take my advice. I want him to go into a dry-goods store, but he wants to be a physician. What can I do to eradicate this tendency?"

Before a stupidity so gross one laughs as at any imbecile crudeness, but it is with tears in one's eyes if one thinks of the story behind it. Imagination pictures to one the poor, silly, provincial feminine thing, all of whose ideas of success are limited to achievements in the dry-goods business, which, though a very good business, is not the one her son prefers.

And through all his developing years she has been the ruling power in the life of a boy studious, mentally tending toward scientific interests. It may be full of genius and deep thought. She cannot understand him, he is not old enough to understand her; she is too unintelligent not to torment and harass him, he is probably too immature to rise above her irritating hen-like flutterings. She does

him mental and moral harm, and because she is a fool—if she is a maternally well-meaning fool—she is wildly anxious.

It might have chanced that this boy's tastes had been mercantile, that he had been full of business instincts and executive ability, and it might have chanced that his mother's idea of respectability had been the medical profession. She might have resented the dry-goods business as unaristocratic, and have insisted on medical lectures and the study of drugs. In that case he would still have been equally the victim, and she, poor soul, equally the fool. The boy whose tastes were for business might have measured calico and sold tape in the provincial shop as the first step on the high-road leading to the great world, where he might have reigned later as a merchant prince, the mover in great business schemes of use to many, the gainer of great wealth which, through his employment of it passed from hand to hand, supplied

work to workers, gave aid to need, helped the big world to move.

And this frail, unintelligent creature who had taken it upon herself to decide for him would have been the means of forcing him to be an inferior in a profession when he might have been a power in the world of trade, just as she might make an incapable tradesman of a boy who might have won fame and aided a whole suffering world as a man of science. In each case she would have made a life a tragedy. What tragedy could be greater than a life of failure which might have been a life of success? And in each case the man who lived the life, not the one who decided his fate, would be the bearer of the suffering the tragedy implied.

One can readily imagine such a woman looking on with uncomprehending discontent at the troubles and failures as they dragged themselves out from year to year.

"Somehow Jem never did get on," she

would say. "He hasn't any faculty for making his way like other men."

And she would be totally unconscious that it was she—her poor unintelligent mother-self—who had hung her feeble but obstinate predilections like a ball and chain about his feet, forcing his footsteps to slowness and faltering when they might have been swift and strong.

Almost every one among his acquaintances can recall, if he pauses to reflect, one or more cases of lives more or less failures of which he has heard it said: "He wanted very much to be this or that thing, but his family were opposed to it." I say that almost every one knows of some such case, but I do not believe that any one has heard it said of a successful and happy man: "His tastes lay all in the direction of a totally different career, but his people were determined not to allow it, and the result is that he is perfectly happy and successful in the life they chose for him."

There might be, though I beg leave to doubt it gravely, a case of a boy who, having been filled with longings for other things, was coerced by his rulers, or by circumstances, into becoming a pork-packer, or having a desire to be a pork-packer was persuaded by his relatives to enter a career of art, and in after years won the success which brings money, but one might be quite sure that his life was a failure and an unsatisfied thing. The life that fails is the life that is unsatisfied in longings which might have been fulfilled.

It is not unnatural that a man who is a scholar or an artist should prefer that his son's tastes should be somewhat like his own ; it is not unnatural that an energetic business man, if he is not an intellectual person also, should feel that the son who leans toward art in literature, painting, or the drama is something of an unpractical dreamer. But in both cases the life to be decided is the one still to be lived and endured or enjoyed, and

it is not the life of the father or mother—it is that of the boy.

“What are you going to make of this remarkable boy?” some one asked a literary parent.

“What am I going to make of him!” was the answer. “Nothing. I hope to be able to form an intelligent character for him, and then see what he will make of himself.”

“But don’t you wish him to take to literature?”

“If that is his natural inclination I should be delighted. But he might prefer to be a butcher.”

“And in that case?”

“I shall endeavor to help him to secure a butcher’s shop in the best possible business situation, and try to invest his legs of mutton with an air of picturesque distinction. I suppose that—with an effort—one might surround beefsteaks with an almost dramatic and literary atmosphere.”

The years in which a man prepares for his

future are so few and short, the years during which he bears the consequences of that preparation often seem so long, so long. No man can afford to waste one of the short years in battling for what should be his own.

Years ago a boy whose earliest childhood had been colored by his passion for dramatic art announced to his parents that he wished to become an actor. They were gentle people, whose lives had been extremely narrow, though they had been spent in a great metropolis, which is one of the centers of the world. They were horrified by the idea. They thought the dramatic profession immoral, detrimental in every respect, and lowering from a social point of view. Though of an entirely different class from that of the parent who tended toward the dry-goods business, they thought that such a tendency should be eradicated. A strong-willed father and a weak-willed, timid mother did their best to eradicate it. The father sighed, reproached, satirized, and stormed; the mother

wept. The boy struggled to explain his convictions and support his position. One might write a tragic story of such a struggle, but this is only a brief illustrative sketch. The boy was totally dependent, high-spirited, proud, and helpless. He had the artist temperament, and was capable of keenest suffering. He was willing to begin at the lowermost round of the ladder and work his way up. His was not a boyish caprice. He was not pretentious, and was deeply in earnest. At the outset he had the courage to get a small engagement in spite of opposition. The beginning was modest, but he had not expected to do more than gain a foothold. His practical and artistic use of his opportunity was such as promised well. But the feeling in his home circle was too strong. His father was furious, his mother grieved until he felt himself a criminal. If he had been a lion of strength or had been heartlessly indifferent he might have held out. But he was neither. He suffered tortures, and in despair gave way.

After ten years or more of uncertainty, commonplace miseries, and the humiliation of always feeling himself out of place and a failure, his circumstances became so hopeless that he felt himself forced to try again at the one thing he knew he might have done well. But the difference between entering a profession at thirty and at twenty is a tremendous one.

“If I could go back ten years!” was his cry. “I know it would be all right if I could go back ten years. But I can’t—I can’t!”

His strong-willed father and his affectionate, weak-willed mother, who had years enough of their own, had taken those ten years from him. They had obliged him to fritter them away as if they had been grains of sand, instead of a chaplet of pearls. They are old people, whose lives are drawing to a close; his is yet to be borne to the end. He is a young man still, but he is embittered and broken by discouragement. He has not the hopefulness of youth, he has not even the

hopefulness of manhood. I sometimes wonder what the Power, who demands account of things, will demand in exchange for those ten years. And yet these were not consciously bad or heartless people; they were only stupid and selfish, and personal in a comfortable, parental, domestic way.

This is only one of several cases of which I, myself, have known the details, and yet I cannot help but believe, as well as hope, that such cases are exceptions. As the days have gone by when the explosive old comedy father commanded his son or daughter with suitable profanity to enter into a matrimonial alliance upon the spot with the heiress or heir whose fortune he considered a good thing to have in the family, or whose acres he desired to add to his own, so I think the obstinate and unintelligent parent is becoming a belated institution. But that these exceptions still exist we all know, and it is to these exceptions I take the liberty of speaking. It was not your child, but you yourself,

who decided that he should bear the burden of life—the helplessness of childhood, the mistakes of inexperienced youth, the disappointments of maturity, the certainty of death—and all these having been forced upon him it is he, and he alone, who should be allowed the right to decide under what circumstances he will endure or make the best and highest of them that he may. Give him all the help his youth needs and your maturity can supply; give him all the love, sympathy, and tenderness of your wisest, most unselfish, and purely impersonal self. But when this is done, and well done, in the name of justice let him decide, and when he has decided, do all you can to encourage him by loving, tender, and sympathetic words of advice and encouragement.



Phase Three

THE BOY IN THE OFFICE

BY EDWARD W. BOK





Yours very cordially
Edward W. Bok

THE BOY IN THE OFFICE



THE parents of the boy who is earning three or four dollars per week in an office are naturally full of anxiety for his future. More particularly is this true of the mother. She watches him as he leaves the house to go to his desk each morning, and after a year or two she wonders why her boy's salary is not increased. "He is such a good boy," she reasons to herself, or tells some friend, "I am sure he deserves more money than he receives." This is the parental belief, and it is a natural one. But to be "a good boy" in the home does not always imply a helpful boy in the office. One does not necessarily follow the other, yet it must be confessed that domestic influences play an important part in the success of the boy in the office.

So far as possible every parent should try and see that his or her boy gets from the very start into that particular line of business for which he seems to have either a natural bent or taste. An uncongenial position is just as distasteful to a boy as it is to a man, and it is always a fatal mistake to turn a boy away from his natural inclinations. If his mind seems to be that of a lawyer it is far better that he should be put into a lawyer's office from the start. By being office-boy in such an office, and climbing up, he knows just what every position calls for, and ten chances to one he will treat his employees better, when he becomes a practicing lawyer himself, than if he had not had the experience. I am a strong believer in the theory that a man should be an employee before he becomes an employer, and if he can pass through every position in the same business—from the office-boy's desk up—in which he afterward starts for himself, he will be the gainer for it.

The advancement of a boy when in an office is necessarily slow, and a great deal of patience is necessary, especially on the side of the parents. If they become impatient the feeling is quickly imbibed by the boy, and he becomes impregnated with that most fatal of all beliefs to a boy—that he is not appreciated by his employer. When a parent, by word or action, instills that belief in a boy, he impresses upon him the first wrong lesson in life. Promotion from errand or office boy to the next position is very tedious work, and it is slow because there is a wide gulf between the office-boy's desk and the next position above it. At the same time the office-boy's desk is the only one in a business house which is absolutely transient in its character. A man may remain a stenographer, a clerk, a bookkeeper, a cashier, all his life, but the office-boy's desk is just what it indicates: the starting-point of graduation.

After a boy passes his sixteenth year he is supposed to pass from under his mother's

care to that of the father. But it is before his sixteenth year that the average boy begins or passes through his experience as office or errand boy. Hence, the responsibility of impressing correct principles on a boy's mind rests with the mother.

If, for example, punctuality is an unknown quality in a household, it is not likely that a boy will reach his desk punctually. In fact, he cannot do so. He is dependent upon the home machinery for rising and getting his breakfast. When I was an office-boy I was always at my desk at eight o'clock, but the fact that I was there was not due to myself in any sense. It was because my mother saw that I rose in time, had my breakfast in season, and left the house in plenty of time to reach the office. In that way the value of punctuality was impressed upon me. It is, indeed, the first essential of success in the life of an office-boy. Rushing into the office at five minutes after eight, or whatever may be the hour set for the boy, is bad, since it is

just as possible to reach the office five minutes before the hour.

Another point in a boy's habits that leads to success in which the mother plays a part is in the neatness of his dress. No employer expects a boy earning three or four dollars per week to be dressed in the immediate fashions. But he has a right to expect that his boy be neatly dressed. No matter how poor we are, there is no excuse for any one wearing soiled linen. A clean collar and shirt should be made possible for every boy. Wherever possible, too, mothers should early train their boys to the wearing of cuffs, since they do much to impress cleanliness. A clean pair of cuffs adds a great deal to a boy's appearance. As we feel so do we work. Every man has experienced the comfortable feeling that arises because of the fact that he was wearing a new suit of clothes, and the increased interest in his surroundings and work because of this feeling. Our clothes unquestionably affect our feelings, and our

feelings affect our work. If a boy feels clean and is neatly dressed he will do better work than if he is allowed to go to his office morning after morning with his clothes unbrushed, his face and hands only half washed, and his hair carelessly combed. Neatness does much for a boy in the eyes of his employer, and it costs nothing except a little pains. An employer likes to see the people in his office as well dressed as their circumstances allow, and it pleases him to see his office-boy, when he sends him on errands to other business houses, make a good appearance.

It is in the home life that a boy must have formed for him the habits that will win him success in the outer world, and here everything depends upon the parents, and, as I said before, particularly upon the mother. It is she who can strike the wrong or the right key for a boy's whole day in the manner in which she sends him from home. If, in the morning, he is scolded for this, and scolded for that, he will start the day wrong, and

show the effects of it in his work during the entire day. If, on the other hand, he goes from a bright sunny home with his mother's kiss as his last good-by, depend upon it the day will be bright for him. His spirits are affected just as he starts the day. It is sad enough that so many boys must be sent out into the world to earn money at too young an age, but if this must be so, the hardships can be lightened for them. Again and again have I seen boys going to their desks in the morning with red, swollen eyes and a look that betokened anything but a pleasant home-leaving.

I am inclined to believe, too, that our boys do not, in a great many cases, receive from their parents that degree of sympathetic interest in their work that ought to be extended them. If a boy feels interested in his daily duties and the people with whom he comes in contact, he naturally likes to talk about them over the dinner-table or during the evening at home. Parents who enter with a

proper spirit into this interest on the part of a boy are the exception rather than the rule. They look upon their boy's going out into the world as a dire necessity, and once he reaches home they do not like to be reminded of it. This is better in theory than it is in practice. If a boy, filled with an ambition to become a factor in the business world which is yet all so strange to him, fails to find a sympathetic audience in his father or his mother, his enthusiasm receives a blow.

Parents should remain quiet factors in their boy's success in the office—not visible ones. Some mothers—and fathers, too—have a way of too directly entering into their boy's life, and visiting the office where he is employed. As a rule, employers resent this, and their resentment is a just one. Sometimes circumstances make it possible for parents to meet their boy's employer in a pleasant and natural manner, and under such conditions the meeting can be made advantageous. But going to the office, and trying to advance the inter-

ests, is unwise. Interference is resented by the employer, as I have said, and it is injurious to the boy, since it is far better for him to feel that he stands for himself in the business world, and that he cannot rely upon any one's assistance. The employer feels the home influence indirectly, and it counts far more than if the father and mother became a visible quantity. A good home training has a way of making itself apparent under all circumstances.

Upon the boy himself of course much depends—the largest part, by far. If he is taught one thing at home and does another when away from home, then the consequences are his own. A boy succeeds in an office just in proportion as he carries himself and shows that he is deserving. It is folly to say that an office-boy is a unit in the eyes of his employer. He is not. A capable office-boy has his value to an office—just as much value as has a good bookkeeper—and every employer realizes this fact. The boy in the

office is far more in the eyes of his chief than he oftentimes imagines. An office-boy is always looked upon by an employer as a possibility. He is ever hopeful that the boy may show those qualities which will justify him in giving him more responsible work. The willingness upon the part of the employer to advance the boy in his office is present. Neither boy nor parent need have the slightest fear on this ground. The whole point rests upon whether the boy justifies the interest of his employer.

Now I shall not say that a boy will succeed just in proportion as he is honest and truthful. This must go by inference. Everything in the business world depends upon honesty and truthfulness. Without these foundation-stones no business can live. I do not say that a boy *should* be honest, truthful, and faithful. I say he *must* be. But to be simply and solely what those three qualities mean will not win him success. He must be something more.

The average office-boy does just what he is told to do. There he stops, and just there he fails. Now running errands can be made an art just as well as scores of boys now make it a hardship both to themselves and to their employer. The streets of our large cities are filled, during business hours, with office-boys. For the most part they are a deplorable sight. It is the exception to see a boy going along the street doing what he is sent out to do, and doing it in a business-like manner. The average boy shuffles along as if it were an absolute impossibility for him even to pick up his feet. He must strike every sign and post he meets on his way. He must throw something at every dog he sees. He makes a stopping-place of every candy-stand and fruit-cart. If he is not yelling he is whistling. He believes that every empty truck or wagon is especially made for him to steal a ride upon. Now such a boy is more often seen on the street by his employer, or by some one who tells that employer, than

the boy imagines. We do not expect our boys to be men, but we do expect that when sent on an errand they will do that errand as well as they can, and behave themselves when they are doing it. Errand-running is the first test of a boy's character. If he can attend to errands well he will make an impression that will be valuable to him.

When a boy is sent on an errand he should realize and feel that, for that moment, he is the representative of his employer, and see to it that his employer is represented by him and in him in the most creditable manner. When he receives his employer's message he should listen to it well, and for the moment dismiss everything else from his mind, and concentrate his thoughts upon the one thing expected of him. He should try to enter into the emergencies of a case and ascertain what will be expected of him if he finds it impossible to deliver his message. He should try to be something more than a messenger-boy pure and simple. Having his message well

in mind, let him go straight to his destination as quickly as possible, and as quickly return. Business men always appreciate dispatch in a boy. Politeness, also, should be a living rule with every boy. Few things count for more in business or impress themselves so strongly. It is well for a boy to look upon every man he meets, in or out of his office, as a possible employer. A boy should strive to make an impression upon every business man he meets, not knowing what day he may be beholden to that man. Little acts of politeness on the part of a boy, such as invariably removing his hat when he comes into an office, or touching his cap when he meets men whom he has seen in the street, go a long way, and are not overlooked even by the busiest men.

In his work in the office, a boy should, above all things, be thorough. If his chief duty is to copy letters let him study the letter-press and its implements until he makes an art of what so many boys make a failure.

Much depends upon a clear copy of a letter sometimes. If a boy is depended upon to sweep the office and keep it clean let him devote his every energy to doing it well. An office neatly kept is a very strong recommendation for a boy to his employer. The employer may, in the boy's eyes, not seem to notice that his room is always clean and neat, but depend upon it he does. He may not speak of it; he may have an entirely different and more substantial way of showing his appreciation. Even in cases where an employer may not be neat himself he appreciates neatness in others. A boy should always take care to keep his own desk and special little domain looking as neat as possible.

The average office-boy makes his greatest mistakes when he has any leisure moments. While he is kept busy he may be the best boy his employer feels he has ever had. But it is during those moments which come to every boy in an office when he has noth-

ing to do, that he commits those lapses which undo for him everything he has done for himself during his busy moments. There are few things that are more irritating to an employer than to see his office-boy sitting at his desk doing absolutely nothing. Then it is that the average boy either sits drumming on his desk with his fingers, whittling with his knife, idly gazing out of a window, or talking and laughing with others who have work to do. These things are very fatal to a boy's success. A boy should see to it that he has very few moments in which there is not something for him to do. If there is nothing just at his fingers' ends let him look around and see if there is not something he can do which he has put off during busy seasons. But let him keep himself busy, doing something, no matter how insignificant. To read books is a good habit in its way, and yet I have never been able to feel that reading belongs to business hours on the part of a boy or any one else. I believe the mind of a boy who reads

a newspaper, if he can find nothing else to do, is in better condition for business than the boy who reads a book, and I care not what may be its character.

It is not unlikely that through this article I shall reach the eyes and ears of thousands of office-boys, either directly or through their parents, and in these closing words I will write even more directly to them than I have in what I have said above.

The chance exists for every office-boy to begin a successful business career just where he is to-day, even though he is earning but three dollars per week. It is not the salary you earn, my lad, nor the position you are now in that means your success, but it is what you give to your employer for that salary, and what you make of your position, that will count. Never be afraid to give too much for the money you receive.

Be the first at the office in the morning, and the last to leave at night. Don't have your hat all ready to snatch up and run for

the door the moment the clock points to the hour of closing. Let your employer see you at your desk when he goes. Never fear an extra half-hour or hour. A little extra faithfulness after business hours counts for much.

Whatever is given you to do, no matter how trifling it may seem, do it thoroughly. Do it as if it were the only act of the whole day. If it is only the mailing of a letter, mail it in a street letter-box if you think it will be collected sooner than if it waits for the carrier to collect it at the office.

Be at your desk as much as you can; be away from it only when it is absolutely necessary.

Don't play; don't fool at the office; you are not paid for that. Don't stay out at lunch longer than is necessary. Don't feel that you must be out a full hour simply because you are entitled to it. Rather take less than just exactly all or more.

Ask to be "off" only when necessity, such as sickness or death, demands it. Rather lose

a picnic or an excursion than lose one point with your employer.

Don't eat during business hours; have neither candy nor apples nor nuts in your desk. A luncheon hour is given you, and time, too, in which to eat.

Don't cut out pictures and decorate your desk or the wall near you with them. An office is a business place where everything should lead to business, and not to things that belong more to your home than to your office.

Don't sulk because your mother sends you to bed early. She does it that you may be fresh in the morning, and better able to do a good day's work. You need all the sleep you can get.

Be truthful. Don't think "a little lie" won't hurt. It will, just as much as a big one. Liars, small or large, never make a success in business. Stick to the truth, even if you lose by it. You will gain by it later. Be able to look everybody straight in the face.

Keep your boy friends away from the office. They have no business there, and you have no right to have them there. Your employer pays you to receive his callers—not yours.

Be polite to everybody—to the peddler as well as to your employer's best customer. Politeness costs nothing, and is more valuable than many things that cost much.

Do your very best in everything. When you do that you do all you can, but be sure it is your very best. Then will many things come to you, and you will soon out-distance other boys who do as little as they can, or only do things in a half-hearted way. Never mind what other boys do—be you thorough in everything. If you are that you have the key to success.



Phase Four

A BOY'S EVENINGS AND AMUSEMENTS

By MRS. BURTON HARRISON





Constance Cary Harrison

A BOY'S EVENINGS AND AMUSEMENTS

 HERE comes, in the experience of every mother to whom the shaping of her son's future is of the tender and proud importance arising from this more than from any other relation of human kindred, a poignant moment when she seems to stand irresolute on the brink of an unknown sea. Never, perhaps, since the first thrill of "joy for a man-child born into the world," has she known just such emotion as when the boy's life, detaching itself from hers, drifts away, whither only hope and prayer from her can follow it. This period does not always wait upon the boy's departure to school or college. It is attendant upon his first realization of himself as a factor in the society of his kind. He—no matter how limited the sphere—is a voice, a power—can transmit

what has been transmitted to him—tastes the sweets of authority; better than all, he is in the way of finding out things for himself. From that time the winged spirit inside of him begins to beat upon its bars; like the melancholy starling of Sterne's story, it must get out. The restraints, the maxims, the petty laws and habits of home seem irksome—the thrall of the mother, loving and kind though it may be, becomes just a little burdensome.

Ah! then what happiness, what reward does the mother reap who, at this crisis, instead of struggling to assert control of her boy, learns first to control herself? She has—who will not own it?—nothing to gain by queries, by espionage, by lectures. Her surest dependence is to be found in the subtle, tactful opposition of home interests to the call of outside pleasures.

What binds a youngster, at this time of his life, to a dreary home where the gas hangs high and the fires are kept low, where books

are conspicuous by absence, and the piano is closed because its noise is abhorrent to the weary bread-winner; or again, and worse, to a home where the sparring of tongues over all sorts of insignificant topics is heard to the exclusion of that innocent fun nowhere more delightful than among people who know each other to the core? I do not believe in enforced family communion. Many a nature, to accomplish its best fruition, needs certain hours of solitude. Nor does it seem to me necessary for the parents to be a part of every gathering at home of their children and young guests. For this reason a sitting-room—"not too bright and good for human nature's daily" uses—is a desirable adjunct too rarely seen in modern homes. If the lad has some such retreat as this in which to expend his instincts of hospitality to his friends—a room where experiments in photography may be varied (say) by popping corn; where there are shelves for (often inexplicably) favorite story-books; a place for his school-

books and books of reference; a drawer, desk, or cupboard sacred to his own small treasures, a lounge, homely but comfortable, and a few easy-chairs—given these simple surroundings, and a boy of reasonably stay-at-home tastes will be found to adapt himself to evenings in the parental domicile as naturally as a kitten curls before the fire. In late years, since the wave of decorative art has risen to the remotest story of our dwellings, it is hard to find a room suitable, or in the least suggestive of thought, for the comfort of our budding men. The father may have his library, the mother her morning-room, the young girl assumes proprietorship of the drawing-room, the little ones are installed in the most luxurious of nurseries. In and out among all these apartments wanders the schoolboy, ill-at-ease in any of them, except, perchance, his own bedroom. That, or the dining-room—and who cares for a dining-room when its lights are fled and garlands dead?

I dwell upon this fundamental requirement in the art of boy-training because I am constantly struck with the neglect of it in otherwise perfectly appointed homes. There is literally no place for the boy to spend his evenings. The sacrifice of a little space, the price of a rug, a bronze, or a piece of silver, would go so far toward making a boy's paradise at home!

It is not wise to let the boy feel that he is being purposely kept at home in the evening because we mistrust his power to resist temptation to wrong-doing when abroad. This suggests at once to a lively imagination the delights of the unknown and forbidden. It is not that he wishes to be off, but that he would like to know wherein the danger of such absence lies. If his thoughts or fingers, or both, are well supplied with wholesome occupation at home, the moments slip away and bedtime comes unawares. For this reason, if the boy's eyes are reasonably strong, and the light by which he studies is steady

and white and well adjusted, there seems no objection to a regular study-hour or two, following the evening meal. By the blessed provision of mother Nature the call to sleep generally settles definitely, by ten o'clock, the question of further disposition of his evening.

If, for any reason, it is adjudged best that the lad do not devote his evening hours to books, then come into play the mechanical arts, so generally and happily in cultivation at the present time. In certain households, where games are regularly resorted to for relaxation, he is never at a loss; but in the hurry and bustle of our modern home life the evening is usually too short and too broken up for family reunion in the mild, manual diversions of our ancestors. Happy the circle which Music, the enchantress, holds in thrall, and the boy to whose ear she has spoken with surety of response! In her service, weak, halting, conscious of imperfection though he be, the devotee knows no sense of weariness; and although, in the march of modern prog-

ress, the sound-proof room has not yet been added to the noiseless piano, and the beginner on 'cello, violin, or flute must still test the endurance of his neighbors within earshot—his parents know their consolations and reap their harvest in his absorbed delight.

It does not suggest itself to me as needful to make hard and fast rules about a boy's strict keeping at home in the evening. If he is engaged in the usual routine of study preparatory for college, Friday and Saturday evenings are tacitly considered the only ones of the week available in which to accept invitations to attend outside entertainments. An ordinarily ambitious boy has all he can do to prepare his lessons for the following day in the brief time remaining after the late dinner of modern custom. One would consider it a lamentably ordered household whereof the lads made protest against this customary routine.

As to the nature of amusements to be prescribed for growing youths, it is impossible

to dictate to parents who, in the widely different habits of thought on this subject in America, have so many standards of propriety. Each home is a law unto itself in deciding the limit of entertainments allowed away from home. Many people see no objection to a good play at a standard theater as a means of affording pastime for a boy's evenings. But so much that is indescribably repellent to good taste and decency has crept of late years upon the stage, shaking out its banner boldly on the outer wall of the theater where all may see and know what is in store for them, it does seem that authority should draw the line. It is too much the practice of city life to let the boys of the family select for themselves the spectacle or play which is to be the diversion of their week. Relying upon the name and prestige of a "first-class theater," parents inquire no further into the nature of the entertainment, with the result that it is a common experience nowadays to hear girls and boys innocently discussing

between themselves representations upon the stage of themes their elders would blush to name to them. I say innocently, because I have faith in the average boy and girl of our society ; and the very frankness of such comment disarms suspicion of more than a desire to be up to date in theatrical affairs.

The whole scheme of theater-going among our young people seems to be overdone. The boy of a certain class of American society, who wishes to entertain his companions, not only must provide for them a luncheon or dinner as complete in its appointments as if intended for a formal gathering of older guests, but, after it, expects to take them to the best seats at some current fashionable play. This, to say nothing of the expense, naturally precluding a return of hospitality from the friend of moderate means, is a fair example of the unnecessary lavishness which has made us a proverb among nations. The boy thus indulged at home goes into college with elaborate ideas of entertainment that al-

most compel expenditures beyond his purse. The standard of his home outlay, set, perhaps, by a fond mother and acquiescent father, who do not wish their son to be surpassed in liberality by his associates, may become the snare that entraps his feet to downfall. No one who has eyes to see the advanced scale of money-spending for modern youth can have failed to note these facts. The demand on a boy's purse for subscriptions to the various amusements or athletics, for example, would have been scoffed at in his father's day as unwise and impossible. Occupations suggested by and most appropriate to his time of life, his home environments, his association with his kind, are often little in demand. All pleasures and most relaxations have their price, and a high one. Therefore, what amusement it is best for him to indulge in outside of the home must be left to the individual parent to decide. But any boy carried away by the zeal of the agent engaged in "getting up" a paid membership for this or the other

club, or athletic association or entertainment, would be the better for some guidance and control at home.

The mother's supervision of her son's evenings under her roof should be felt, not seen, by the object of her solicitude. That it should be exercised continuously, from the hour of his leaving the nursery to that of going out to take his place as a man among men, it is her duty to see. There is such inspiration to both, in the bond of confidence between son and mother, that the knowledge of her watchfulness may be made pleasant, not irksome, to him. No manly boy thinks it shame to his years and dignity to bring to his mother's sympathy whatever has annoyed or oppressed him during the day. The evening setting in with an interchange of this nature, or the evening that closes with it, is not likely to be burdened to the lad with suspicion or impatience of his guardian.

The question of Sunday evening, its allowances and restrictions of liberty to young

people, is one for strictly individual decision. But the customs of America, despite the ever-increasing leaven of foreign immigration, are in favor of home-keeping, of family reunion, of abstinence from the social observances of the week. In many families, known to the public for their lavish entertainment of smart society, the Sunday habits of their forefathers are still observed with scruple, and the children are allowed to accept no invitations to pass the evening abroad.

In nothing is the mother's sphere of influence over her boy at home more clearly defined than in aiding his choice in reading. The boy born with a love of books is the possessor of a little kingdom of his own, secure and blessed. Nothing can dispossess him; he is never dissatisfied; no hunger or thirst of spirit but can be appeased. To wander in this realm of his, hand-in-hand with her son, is a privilege his mother should recognize and use to its utmost limit. If it be her ill-fortune to find in her child a lack

of interest in reading for himself, a great deal may be done to inoculate the youngster with interest, which is the harbinger of pursuit, by reading aloud to him. I have seen a heedless boy hushed, then captivated, by the heroic passages from Shakespeare and Scott (authors he had persistently avoided for himself) thus administered, and afterward rather shamefacedly go back to pore over their pages at every opportunity of leisure.

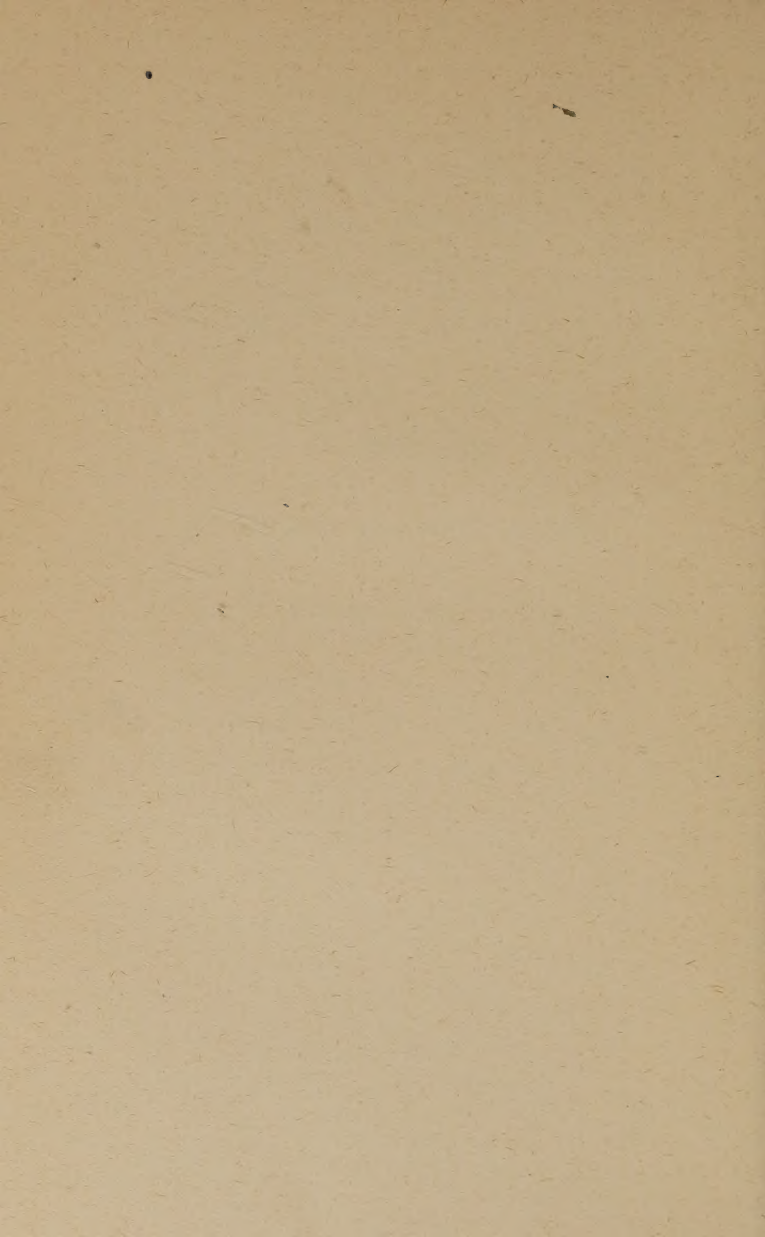
To sum up in fewer words than should be given to a subject of this vital importance, I thoroughly believe that it is the mother who is answerable for her son's relation to his home. Her bias directs his; her relation to the household colors his; in after life he will inevitably order his own belongings in accordance with the simple teachings she has bestowed on him. She is and should be the potent influence that holds him in healthy and happy occupation under the paternal roof during the evenings of his youth, to be remembered with reverent blessing in the evening of his age.



Phase Five

LOOKING TOWARD A WIFE

BY MRS. LYMAN ABBOTT





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